month's rent they'd deposited with him back in the YEAR ONE. For most of that time, the P/Bigge Banks had paid 0% interest, and the clients had moved at least half a dozen times, from one cell to another just like it but always slightly more expensive. Decades ago, they'd started to owe him!

It would all come out, in Night Court....

He was a Mental Hell ADVOCATE....

He believed in HUMAN RIGHTS....

For Citizen Hearse!

*****

Her Edsel screeched to a halt in front of Johnny's thing store. 50s Chick got out. She was stunningly attired in a tight, bright red cocktail dress; it complemented her tight, bright red hair.

She'd obviously come straight from Court.

She asked if Johnny would mind if she came into the store and sat down for a few minutes. He said that was fine.

Her junkie landlady told her that morning that she was renting a room to a bitch with a big dog. She was going to slap with a restraining order, before it ate Slim, her cat.

Johnny said don't be too sure.

Do you mean you think Slim will kick the dog's ass?

Probably, Johnny said; cats often do, unless it's a pit-bull.

I love pit-bulls; they get such bad press. She started to comb her hair in the maroon-upholstered chair....

It was so hot, I simply had to take a cab, but I only had 5 dollars so he had to stop in front of the store....

Johnny was playing a Billie Holiday CD....

Mitzi immediately recognized her....

Johnny said he got it last night, which was perverse because it was Sunday, the one night when most of the record stores were closed, but he found it in a bargain bin for five dollars....

Mitzi said it was incredible how young things would pay 25 dollars for a singer who couldn't even sing but not pay 5 for Billie Holiday, who sang better than everyone....

Johnny said it took an effort to get off Thing Street even for one night. He had an incredibly shitty life, stuck in that store seven days a week, right in the middle of Thing Street.

At the same time he thought Thing Street was the truth that the rest of the world was denying, madness and death....

Thing Street was the future; it was dying too, only a little faster, a lot more visibly, than the rest of Hogtown....

The way of the future, Mitzi guffawed. Actually, she said, hers and Johnny's ideas pretty much coincided....

Thing Street was purgatorial, Johnny said....

Totally purgatorial, Mitzi agreed. She kind of liked it. But now it looked like she had to move somewhere else. Last night her boyfriend told her, he was moving....

To Timbuktu! Her life was falling apart....